





# SPEECH

OF

HON. CHARLES GIBBONS,

DELIVERED AT

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NATIONAL HALL, PHILADELPHIA,

OCTOBER 5th, 1860,

In Reply to the Speech of the Hon. W. B. Reed,  
Delivered before the National Democratic Association,  
Sept. 4, 1860, on the Presidential Question,

AND IN

VINDICATION OF THE PEOPLES' PARTY.



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## SPEECH OF MR. GIBBONS.

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*Gentlemen and Fellow Citizens of Philadelphia :*

As a private citizen of Pennsylvania, removed for some years, from an active participation in political contests, looking for no political preferment, and desiring none, I have the honor to address you this evening, by invitation of the committee of the People's party.

It seems to be understood that, I shall have something to say in reply to an extraordinary speech recently made in this city, by a gentleman who pursues politics as a profession, and who has been the recipient of honors and emoluments from two or three different political parties, at different periods of his life. [Laughter.] I hope it is not expected that I am to forget for the time, anything that is due to justice, honor or truth ; for, however little those virtues may have been observed by some distinguished political leaders, in their recent speeches to citizens of Philadelphia, I hold them, nevertheless, to be better than mountains of gold, and more to be cherished than the highest honors that a people can bestow. [Cheers.]

With this understanding, I shall endeavour to meet what seems to be the public expectation, and also to vindicate the course of the People's party in its efforts to preserve and perpetuate the blessings of liberty, under the Constitution, as the fathers made, understood and administered it, and to secure to the whole country, the prosperity and peace that ought to flow from a Republican government, when justly and honestly conducted. [Cheers.]

The popular candidate for the Presidency, as is very well known, was an active member of the Whig party, and fought its battles year after year, until it ceased to exist. The protection of American industry and the encouragement of peaceful arts by friendly legislation—the improvement of the rivers and harbors of the country, whenever demanded for the better development of its wealth and the safety of its commerce—an honest and economical administration of the Federal government and the supremacy of the Federal Constitution, in all questions arising between States, or the citizens of different States, were the main points which that party sought to establish, and which they labored in vain to secure.

On the question of slavery, every Whig had and exercised the right to think for himself ; and, whether he inclined to the one extreme or the other, neither the party nor its chief was held accountable for his

opinions. It may be said, however, that the great majority of the Whigs were opposed to the extension of slavery, and I believe that no prominent man in the party, ever doubted the constitutional power of Congress to exclude it from the territories. Certainly the power was never questioned by Mr. Clay, or Mr. Webster.

I think the last time Mr. Clay expressed his views on this subject was but little more than a year before his death, during the debate on the Compromise resolutions, which he introduced into the Senate. Mr. Jefferson Davis had declared that "he would never take less than the Missouri Compromise line, extended to the Pacific ocean, with the *specific recognition* of the right to hold slaves in the territory below that line; and that before such territories should be admitted into the Union as States, slaves might be taken there from any of the United States, at the option of the owners."

To this Mr. Clay replied:—

"I am extremely sorry to hear the Senator from Mississippi, say that he requires, first, the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific; and also that he is not satisfied with that, but requires, if I understand him correctly, a positive provision for the admission of slavery south of that line. And now, sir, coming from a slave State, as I do, I owe it to myself, I owe it to truth, I owe it to the subject, to state that no earthly power could induce me to vote for a specific measure for the introduction of slavery where it had not before existed, either south or north of that line. Coming, as I do, from a slave State, it is my solemn, deliberate, and well matured determination that no power—no earthly power, shall compel me to vote for the positive introduction of slavery either south or north of that line. Sir, while you reproach, and justly, too, our British ancestors for the introduction of this institution upon the continent of America, I am, for one, unwilling that the posterity of the present inhabitants of California and of New Mexico, shall reproach us for doing to them just what we reproach Great Britain for doing to us."

Mr. Webster made his great speech on the Compromise measures in the Senate, on the 7th of March, 1850. He then referred to the sentiments he had expressed on the slavery question in a speech delivered in the city of New York, in 1837, and read from that speech as follows:

"I frankly avow my entire unwillingness to do anything which shall extend the slavery of the African race on this continent, or add other slaveholding States to the Union. When I say that I regard slavery in itself as a great moral, social and political evil, I only use language which has been adopted by distinguished men, themselves citizens of slaveholding States."

"I have nothing, sir," he said "to add to or take from those sentiments."

And again, in his compromise speech, he declared:

"Wherever there is a substantive good to be done, wherever there is a foot of land to be prevented from becoming slave territory, I am ready to assert the principle of the exclusion of slavery."

Respecting the morality of slavery, Mr. Clay expressed himself very fully, at an earlier period of his life. In the first volume of Mr. Colton's "Life and Times of Henry Clay," published in 1846, the author, referring to a speech delivered at the annual meeting of the

Colonization Society, at Washington, on the 21st of January, 1827, says :

“The following extracts from this speech stand out in strong relief, as a demonstration of Mr. Clay’s feelings as a man on the slavery question :

“If I could be instrumental in eradicating this deepest stain (slavery) from the character of our country, and removing all cause of reproach on account of it by foreign nations ; if I could only be instrumental in ridding of this foul blot that revered State that gave me birth, or that not less beloved State which kindly adopted me as her son, I would not exchange the proud satisfaction which I should enjoy for the honor of all the triumphs ever decreed to the most successful conqueror. \* \* \* \* \*

“We are reproached with doing mischief by the agitation of this question (slavery). Collateral consequences we are not responsible for. It is not this society which has produced the great moral revolution which the age exhibits. What would they who reproach us have done ? If they would repress all tendencies toward liberty, and ultimate emancipation, they must do more than put down the benevolent efforts of this society. They must go back to the era of our liberty and independence, and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return. They must revive the slave trade with all its train of atrocities. They must blow out the moral lights around us, and extinguish that greatest torch of all, which America presents to a benighted world, pointing the way to their rights, their liberties and their happiness. And when they have achieved all these purposes, their work will yet be incomplete. They must penetrate the human soul, and eradicate the light of reason and the love of liberty. Then, and not till then, when universal darkness and despair prevail, can you perpetuate slavery, and repress all sympathies and all humane and benevolent efforts among freemen in behalf of the unhappy portion of our race doomed to bondage.”

Gentlemen of Philadelphia—Whigs of Philadelphia—these were the sentiments of a man whom you honored and loved till the day of his death. I knew Mr. Colton, his biographer, very well. He frequently called to see me, when passing through Philadelphia, and I knew of his visits to Ashland while engaged in the preparation of his work. It was a labor of love, as well as a faithful history, and I know how careful he was to introduce nothing in it that could place Mr. Clay in a false position, or give a false coloring to his views on any question. The work was published by the sanction and consent of Mr. Clay, several years before his death, and is therefore the highest authority on all subjects of which it treats. Allow me to ask whether you respect the memory of Mr. Clay the less, for the utterance of such sentiments respecting an institution which, southern politicians have recently discovered, to be the only means through which our government can be administered, without violating the Constitution ? If you do, speak out like men, and give a reason for the faith that is in you ! [Cheers.]

Both the political and moral sentiments of Mr. Clay on the question of slavery were those of the Whig party generally, and were earnestly sustained by the Whigs of Philadelphia. Mr. Lincoln, born of humble parents in the State of Kentucky, and removing finally to the State of Illinois, made free by the blessed ordinance 1787, naturally imbibed the same sentiments. He has always maintained them. He has always been the manly, consistent, and able advocate of the principles of the Whigs, to which I have briefly referred, and there he stands, on

a platform made up in chief of those very principles—so just, so conservative, so precisely fashioned after the models of the fathers, that our political opponents in the free States prudently let it alone. It expresses or implies no infidelity to the Constitution of the United States. It looks to no interference by Congress with the domestic institutions of any State in the Union. It contemplates no measure of injustice or unfairness to the people of the South or of any other section of the country. Mr. Lincoln is the representative, the embodiment, if you please, of the resolutions composing that platform. [Cheers.] They express the sentiments which he has always entertained, and which have not been thrust upon him, nor has he assumed them for the occasion. He has never uttered a word of disloyalty to the Constitution, or of hostility to any section of our country. He entertains none. No honest man has ever charged him with it. And if he be elected to the Presidency, an event which is very likely to happen, the spectre of disunion which frightens so many of our citizens, will “vanish into thin air” before the quiet majesty of the law, maintained and administered by an honest and fearless man. [Cheers.]

Who are the assailants of Mr. Lincoln? That he should be opposed by the regular and irregular Democracy is not surprising. He never sympathized with any of them, and none of them ever sympathized with him, on any question at issue between them and their political opponents. He was a blooded Whig, and the blood is in him yet, warm and uncorrupted. [Cheers.] They may, and probably do, oppose him on principle, as they certainly have reason to do. They may even denounce him as a black Republican and an abolitionist, for they have always dealt in epithets and falsehoods. They applied them to Mr. Clay and the Whigs. They called him a black abolitionist, a blackleg, a traitor to the South, and “the murderer of the lamented Cilley!” [That’s true.] Because Mr. Giddings and Mr. Seward and Mr. Adams were acting with the Whigs, and because Mr. Webster, in one of his speeches in the great contest of 1844, called upon the abolitionists to unite with the Whigs in defeating a measure which both alike condemned, the Whigs, North and South, were denounced as an abolition party, with hostile designs upon the domestic institutions of the South. We were called the black Whigs, the lying Whigs, and the tariff of 1842, was the black tariff all over the south; but the Polk, Dallas and Texas tariff in Pennsylvania. Epithets and falsehoods, and frauds defeated us in 1844. They took from Mr. Clay the States of Pennsylvania, Georgia and Louisiana, and placed Mr. Polk in the Presidential chair. I am, therefore, not surprised that the same party should resort to the same tactics again.

The gentleman chosen for this service by the Breckinridge wing of Philadelphia, has assumed the task under somewhat peculiar circumstances. Some of you may remember him as a distinguished leader of the anti-Masonic party. That was before my time. I knew him first as a Whig—and he held office as a Whig. He then hob-nobbed politically with the Americans and held office as a hob-nobber; [laughter] and in 1856, he took his final leap into the arms of the Democracy.



Let me do him the justice to say that, he has never forgotten his self-respect so far as to accept an office that would degrade an American gentleman, and never left a party that was able to confer one. [Great laughter.] What he has been and what he is, would be, under some circumstances, no business of yours or mine. But he challenges inquiry on that point, by the graceful ease with which he consigns to perdition all of his old associates, who adhere to those principles respecting the extension of slavery, which he himself professed and taught, until he found a favorable chance to "do better." [Laughter.] I may, therefore, without impropriety, invite your attention to what he has said and done on that question, in the maturity of his judgment, and show you how proudly he has presented to the world that ancestor whose name he delights to honor—in the very mantle that has fallen upon the abolitionists of the present day. [Cheers and laughter.]

In the year 1847, there was published in this City a contribution to American history, in two octavo volumes, entitled, "The Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed," edited by his grandson, Mr. William B. Reed. In the second volume of that work, the author introduces a history of the Act of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania for the gradual abolition of slavery, passed in the year 1780. Referring to the efforts of the Quakers to abolish slavery in this State, which he alleges "were singularly inoperative of good," Mr. Reed says :

"The Revolution, asserting a practical equality between man and man, effected much more; and the men of the Revolution, who were regarded as extreme in their democratic tendencies, had the honor of extinguishing slavery from the soil."

The Vice-President, Mr. Bryan, in his message to the Assembly on the 9th of November, 1778, after referring to the heads of a bill for the abolition of slavery furnished to the preceding assembly, says :

"This, or some better scheme, would tend to abrogate slavery, the opprobrium of America, from among us. \* \* \* In divesting the State of slavery, you will equally serve the cause of humanity and policy, and offer to God one of the most proper and best returns of gratitude for His great deliverance of us and our posterity from thralldom; you will also set your character for justice and benevolence in the true point of view to all Europe, who are astonished to see a people struggling for liberty holding negroes in bondage."

But Mr. Reed, after a fling at the Quakers for their inefficiency, claims for his grandfather the honor of striking the most efficient blow for liberty. President Reed earnestly called the attention of the Assembly to the subject early in 1779, by a message in the following words :

"We would again bring into your view a plan for the gradual abolition of slavery, so disgraceful to any people, and more especially to those who have been contending in the great cause of liberty themselves, and upon whom Providence has bestowed such eminent marks of its favor and protection. We think we are called on to evince our gratitude in making our fellow men joint heirs with us of the same inestimable blessings, under such restrictions and regulations as will not injure the community, and will imperceptibly enable them to relish and improve the station to which they will be advanced. Honored will that State be in the

annals of history, which shall first abolish this violation of the rights of mankind, and the memories of those will be held in grateful and everlasting remembrance, who shall pass the law to restore and establish the rights of human nature in Pennsylvania."

"Again," says the author, on page 176, "to the same body did it become necessary for the Executive to speak, and we find, on the 9th of September, 1779, President Reed urged them to action."

"Our anxiety to perpetuate and extend the blessings of freedom and enlarge the circle of humanity, induces me to remind you of the bill emancipating the children born of negro and mulatto parents. We wish to see you give the complete sanction of law to this noble and generous purpose, and adorn the annals of Pennsylvania with their bright display of justice and public virtue."

Now, gentlemen, mark the opinions and the language of the ancestor: that "slavery is disgraceful to any people,"—that "our fellow men" (meaning the negro slaves,) should "be joint heirs with us, in the inestimable blessings of liberty;" that slavery is "a violation of the rights of mankind;" that its abolition would be "a bright display of justice and public virtue."

Mr. Reed was proud to say all this of his ancestor in 1847. What does he think of him now? [Cheers and laughter.] Mr. Sumner could hardly say more, nor the "crazy Frenchman," Victor Hugo, nor Lord Brougham, nor John Brown, nor Wendell Phillips, nor Gerrit Smith, the abolition candidate for the Presidency. [Cheers.]

On page 179 of the same volume, Mr. Reed expresses his own opinion of the abolition sentiments of his grandfather and others who passed the Act of 1780. "Abolition with them," says he, "was the application of high principles of abstract equality, in order to eradicate, without violence and by gradual processes, an admitted and inveterate evil. This it has effected, and without the least agitation. Pennsylvania, by the wisdom of her revolutionary men, has been relieved from the deep stain on her character and burden on her energies. Pennsylvania was first in the great work."

This was written some years before Mr. Reed went to China and studied diplomacy. [Laughter.]

What did he mean by those "ominous words"—"high principles of abstract equality"—"an admitted and inveterate evil"—"the deep stain on her character"—"first in the great work?" They are now historical. They are in every public library. They are indelibly inscribed on the elaborate monument he has erected to the memory of his grandfather. They will be read by his descendants, and future generations, in ignorance of his fugitive political harangues, will give him a niche between President Reed and William Lloyd Garrison, unless by some ingenuity he can blot them from the record. [Cheers and laughter.]

Allow me to make one more reference to the book already cited. In a foot-note, on page 178, he says:

"It may not be inopportune to call public attention in this place, to another legislative measure of kindred interest, the resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, of the 22d December, 1819, on the Missouri question. They were written by Wm. J. Duane, then a representative from Philadelphia. They breathe in eloquent language the Pennsylvania sentiment of 1780."

Hearken now, my fellow-citizens, to that resolution, which passed both Houses without a dissenting voice, and was voted for by David R. Porter, Josiah Randall, William Wilkins, Daniel Sturgeon, and William J. Duane, all known to you as distinguished citizens of our State; and which Mr. Reed cordially and fully endorses in his history of the Act of 1780.

“A measure was ardently supported in the last Congress of the United States, and will probably be as earnestly urged during the existing session of that body, which has a palpable tendency to impair the political relations of the several States; which is calculated to mar the social happiness of the present and future generations; which, if adopted, would impede the march of humanity and freedom through the world; and would transfer from a misguided ancestry an odious stain, and fix it indelibly upon the present race—a measure, in brief, which proposed to spread the crimes and cruelties of slavery from the banks of the Mississippi to the shores of the Pacific. When a measure of this character is seriously advocated in the Republican Congress of America, in the nineteenth century, the several States are invoked by the duty which they owe to the Deity, by the veneration which they entertain for the memory of the founders of the republic, and by a tender regard for posterity, to protest against its adoption, to refuse to covenant with crime, and to limit the range of an evil that already hangs in awful boding over so large a portion of the Union.

\* \* \* \* \*

“If, indeed, the measure against which Pennsylvania considers it her duty to raise her voice, were calculated to abridge any of the rights guaranteed to the several States; if, odious as slavery is, it was proposed to hasten its extinction by means injurious to the States upon which it was unhappily entailed, Pennsylvania would be the first to insist upon a sacred observance of the constitutional compact. But it cannot be pretended that the rights of any of the States are at all to be affected by refusing to extend the mischiefs of human bondage over the boundless regions of the West, a territory which formed no part of the Union at the adoption of the Constitution; which has been but lately purchased from a European power by the people of the Union at large; which may or may not be admitted as a State into the Union at the discretion of Congress; which must establish a Republican form of government, and no other; and whose climate affords none of the pretexts urged for resorting to the labor of natives of the torrid zone; such a territory has no right, inherent or acquired, such as those States possessed which established the existing Constitution. When that Constitution was framed in September, 1787, the concession that three-fifths of the slaves in the States then existing should be represented in Congress could not have been intended to embrace regions at that time held by a foreign power. On the contrary, so anxious were the Congress of that day to confine human bondage within its ancient home, that on the 13th of July, 1787, that body unanimously declared that slavery or involuntary servitude should not exist in the extensive territories bounded by the Ohio, the Mississippi, Canada and the lakes; and in the 9th article of the Constitution itself, the power of Congress to prohibit the emigration of servile persons after 1808, is expressly recognized. Nor is there to be found in the statute book, a single instance of the admission of a territory to the rank of a State, in which Congress has not adhered to the right vested in them by the Constitution, to stipulate with the territory upon the conditions of the boon.

“The Senate and House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, therefore, cannot but deprecate any departure from the humane and enlightened policy pursued, not only by the illustrious Congress which framed the Constitution, but by their successors without exception. They are persuaded that to open the fertile regions of the West to a servile race would tend to increase their numbers beyond all past example, would open a new and steady market for the lawless vendors of human flesh, and would render all schemes for obliterating this most foul blot upon the American character useless and unavailing. Under these convictions,

and in the full persuasion that upon this topic there is but one feeling in Pennsylvania,

*“Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, That the Senators of this State in the Congress of the United States be, and they are hereby instructed, and that the Representatives of this State in the Congress of the United States be, and they are hereby requested, to vote against the admission of any territory as a State into the Union, unless said territory shall stipulate and agree that ‘The further introduction of slavery or involuntary servitude, except for the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall be prohibited; and that all children born within the said territory, after its admission into the Union as a State, shall be free, but may be held to service until the age of twenty-five years.’”*

This was the spirit of 1780—the liberty-loving spirit of the fathers—as full of vitality in 1819, as when it was first born in the midst of the Revolution. On the floor of Congress it found a champion from our own city, who sustained it with surpassing ability, winning laurels in that great contest which will crown his memory to the latest time.

I need hardly say that I refer to the late John Sergeant, the Nestor of the Whigs of Philadelphia, one of the ablest lawyers and statesmen that this country has ever produced. [Cheers.] It was my privilege to know him, and to love him, and I do not believe that a better or a purer man ever lived. He went to his grave honored and beloved by his fellow-citizens: and I can say to every young man who aims at an honorable distinction in life, and a spotless fame after death, that he cannot do better than study the character of John Sergeant, and strive to imitate his example. [Applause.] In his great speech on the Missouri restriction, you will find his opinions on the extension of slavery, which are concurrent in all respects with those embodied in the resolutions of the Chicago convention, and maintained by Abraham Lincoln. [Cheers.]

The Pennsylvania sentiment of 1780 was again expressed by the Legislature of the State on the 22d of January, 1847, during the administration of Governor Shunk, in the following words:

*“Whereas, the existing war with Mexico may result in the acquisition of new territory to the Union.*

*“And whereas, measures are now pending in Congress having in view the appropriation of money and the conferring authority on the treaty-making power to this end. Therefore,*

*“Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress be requested to vote against any measure whatever by which territory will accrue to the Union, unless, as a part of the fundamental law upon which any compact or treaty for this purpose is based, slavery or involuntary servitude, except for crime, shall be forever prohibited.”*

This resolution passed the House of Representatives, on a call of the yeas and nays, unanimously. Every Democrat and every Whig voted for it, ninety-five members being present. I was then Speaker of the Senate, and very well remember when I entered the Senate chamber on the day that it passed that body, I was accosted by Mr. Senator Bigler, who stated that he had just received a letter from one of his political friends in Washington, urging him to have the resolution sent to Congress with as little delay as possible, and he asked me

to give him the floor early in the day, for the purpose of moving to take up the resolution. I acceded to his request, and on his motion the resolution was taken up. Not a syllable was uttered against it. But, nevertheless, Mr. Bigler made a speech in support of it, in which he took occasion to avow his most cordial approval of the principle it expressed, declared it to be the true Pennsylvania doctrine, and that he desired to place himself on the record in support of it. He did so—as you will see by reference to the Senate journal of that session. It passed the Senate, on a call of the yeas and nays, almost unanimously, three Senators only voting against it. That was as late as 1847—the same year that Mr. Reed published the life and correspondence of his grandfather.

Mr. Bigler and myself voted alike on that resolution, and as respects the principle that it involves, I stand now, and ever expect to stand, as I stood then. [Cheers.] Mr. Bigler's name still stands on the record—but “negrophobia” has turned his head, and the man has been running away from his record ever since. [Laughter.]

During the administration of Governor Johnston, who, as Speaker of the Senate succeeded Governor Shunk in 1848, and was elected Governor by the people in the same year, the Pennsylvania doctrine of 1780 was ably sustained. Mr. Reed was on confidential terms with Governor Johnston, who consulted him freely on all important questions, and although not officially connected with his administration, was generally considered, and I believe was, the Governor's chief adviser—whether his advice was asked for or not. [Laughter.]

In his message of January, 1849, Governor Johnston used the following language on this question :

“This fundamental law (the Constitution) recognizes the right to hold slaves in the States which were parties to the compact, but it makes no further acknowledgment. It bears on its plain and expressive page no agreement, expressed or implied, for the further extension of human slavery. That this national wrong has been extended with the progress of population, is not an argument in favor of its justice, its constitutional right, or of the salutary effects it has produced in the territories where it has been admitted. Shall it be still further extended ?

*“To the Congress of the United States belongs the authority to settle this important question.”* \* \* \* \* \*

“If slavery be in itself an infraction of human rights—if it be directly opposed to the enlightened spirit of our free institutions—if it destroy the equality of power in the general government by enlarging, where it exists, the constitutional representation—if it possess a direct or indirect influence against Northern and Western policy and interests, by promoting a system of laws destructive of domestic industry and vitally affecting free labor—if it retard the national growth of population and improvement, by the appropriation of large tracts of land for the benefit of the few and to the injury of the many—if it be in open defiance of the spirit of the age, the march of national truth and the enlightened policy of mankind—it is time to arrest its further progress. These, it is believed, are the settled convictions of our citizens, and their determination to maintain them is unalterable.”

In his message of 1850, he said :

“The consent of the free States of the Union to its further progress would evince an ignorance of their interests; of the rights of justice and humanity; and an indifference to the character and dignity of their common country. Where these are implicated, it is an abandonment of duty to compromise.”



In another message of the 22d of March, 1850, which was an able vindication of the Pennsylvania doctrine on the same subject, Governor Johnston referred in plain terms of approval to the Act of 1847, which prohibited any judge, alderman or justice of the peace of this Commonwealth from taking cognizance or jurisdiction of the case of any fugitive from labor, under a severe penalty, denied the use of our prisons for the detention of such fugitives, and repealed that part of the Act of 1780 which authorized the masters or owners of slaves to bring and retain such slaves in servitude for any period of time within this Commonwealth.

The course and the opinions of Gov. Johnston were fully endorsed and approved, not only by Mr. Reed, but also by Mr. Joseph R. Ingersoll, at a Whig meeting held in the Chinese Museum, on the 3d of June, 1850. Mr. Ingersoll presided at that meeting. He delivered a glowing eulogy on Gov. Johnston and his administration, and among the resolutions presented by Mr. Reed, and approved by Mr. Ingersoll, you will find the following :

*“Resolved, That as Pennsylvanians, citizens of a State whose loyalty to the Union and Constitution has never faltered, even when under the forms of the Constitution her dearest interests have been sacrificed—which has always yielded implicit obedience to every well ascertained obligation of the Federal compact, however repulsive to mere local sentiment—we thank our chief magistrate (Gov. Johnston) for his assertion of Pennsylvania faith and loyalty and steady principle, in his message of the 22d March, 1850, a State paper, in its spirit and manly patriotism worthy of the best days and best men of the republic.”*

I beg leave to remind Mr. Ingersoll and Mr. Reed of that State paper, which elicited such high praise from them on the occasion referred to, and went the full length of the old Pennsylvania doctrine. It would be interesting to know what they think of it now. [Laughter and applause.]

In that year Mr. Clay introduced into the Senate a series of measures known as the compromise measures, intended to pacify those southern politicians who then threatened a dissolution of the Union, because a free State, formed out of part of the territory acquired from Mexico, knocked at the doors of Congress for admission into the Union. It was the third great compromise which liberty was called upon to make with slavery, and we were told then that it would be the last, because it would satisfy the South. On the evening of the 3d of June, 1850, Mr. Reed stood up in the same meeting to which I have referred, (at which Mr. Joseph R. Ingersoll presided), read certain resolutions besides the one which I have mentioned, prepared with his accustomed skill—and made a speech. The meeting did not understand the real object of either—for it would have been indiscreet in Mr. Reed to avow it. But there was one fact which did not escape notice. Although the eyes of the country were then directed to Mr. Clay, and his efforts to preserve the Union, which was threatened as well by the abolitionists in the North as the proslavery fanatics in the South—and although the Whigs of Philadelphia had never assembled on any former occasion without some manifestation of affection for the founder and

chief of their party, whom they loved better than any other living man—yet Mr. Reed, on that occasion, when it was difficult to discuss his resolutions without a direct reference to Mr. Clay's position on the question of the admission of California, did not make the slightest allusion to him. The meeting heard his speech and adopted his resolutions, but there was a prevailing suspicion that a cat was in the meal tub. [Laughter.] Pardon me, gentlemen, for mentioning the part which I acted on that occasion; it is a necessary part of its history. I was present, and the meeting called me to the rostrum. Knowing, as I did, the Whig sentiment of Philadelphia, I embodied it in a single resolution, which I presented in the following words:

*“Resolved, That while we tender to the President of the United States the assurances of our unabated confidence in his devotion to the welfare of the people, we cannot withhold a public expression of our continued regard and admiration for Henry Clay, the patriot statesman, whose services to the country we shall ever hold in grateful remembrance, and whose recent efforts to perpetuate and strengthen our glorious Union have rendered his name and his fame still more dear and illustrious.”* (Great cheering.)

The resolution “took down the house.” It was welcomed by cheer after cheer, and Mr. Reed came forth to define his position. The meeting was turbulent—it caught the idea that he had concealed from them the real meaning of his resolutions, and he was hissed. Order being finally restored, he made a clean breast of it, and declared that, if the resolution was intended to endorse the compromise measures, he was opposed to it. His opposition carried no weight with it—the resolution was adopted almost unanimously. He turned to me and said—with unusual excitement—“You have endorsed the compromise measures.” So I did, and so I intended (with an exception which I shall notice,) for I believed they would satisfy the South, and end the conflict which seemed otherwise “irrepressible.” It turns out that I was mistaken. Mr. Reed, who was then as much opposed to slavery as his grandfather, was opposed to the concessions which those measures made to the South.

Mr. Reed strenuously advocated the re-election of Gov. Johnston, in 1851; and I hold in my hand a printed circular, issued on the 6th October of that year, written by him, attesting at once his undying attachment to Whig principles, and his relentless hostility to the Democratic party, “the party which,” he solemnly assures you in this paper, “makes war on business interests whenever it suits their purposes.” Allow me to read a single paragraph from Mr. Reed's pen of that date:

*“Gov. Johnston is to be defeated—such is the calculation of his enemies—by a local prejudice, cunningly excited about slavery. For this there is no foundation. He is no agitator. He stands by the old Pennsylvania doctrine, and has, in no public act, gone as far as in former days John Sergeant, and Horace Binney, and Samuel Breck, and Thos. P. Cope, and William J. Duane went; and their acts and manly opinions did no harm to Philadelphia. They made her respected.”* (Cheers and laughter.)

In a letter addressed to Hon. A. G. Curtin, dated Philadelphia, July 26, 1855, resigning his position as a member of the Whig State Com-

mittee, and published in the North American of August 10th, 1855, Mr. Reed laid down his own platform, in seven brief, comprehensive articles. Referring to what had taken place in the Committee, on the subject of Know-Nothingism, he says :

“To the proposition to call a Whig Convention, I cheerfully assented, meaning, as soon as the call was determined on, to ask the Committee, by a manly declaration of principle, to free that Convention, on its inception, from the suspicion which, since this secret party has existed, has hung round every political body that has met. I therefore offered and asked the Committee to adopt the following brief but comprehensive resolutions, every word of which had been well considered, and for every word of which I am willing to be responsible :

“*Resolved*, By the Whig Executive Committee of the State of Pennsylvania, that an address be issued by this Committee, calling a Convention to meet at Harrisburg on ———, asserting the following principles of action :

[The 1st, 2d and 3d relate exclusively to secret political associations, and are condemnatory of them.]

“4. The assertion of the feeling common to every Whig of Pennsylvania, and to very many of other organizations, that the Nebraska and Kansas measures of the last Congress, the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise line, and, as part of the same system, the lawless and violent conduct of individuals since in Kansas, especially are abhorrent to the people of the North, and ought to be redressed.

“5. That those measures were a wanton renewal of sectional agitation, for which, in no sense, are the Whigs of the North, and especially the Whigs of Pennsylvania, responsible.

“6. That the restoration of the Missouri Compromise line ought to be demanded and insisted on as a matter of right.

“I shall look with deep interest to the constitution and action of the Convention which is summoned to meet at Harrisburg in September. I trust its action may be unreserved in the enunciation of principle—conciliatory to those who agree in principle—and REPUBLICAN in every sense, and most so in this, that no whisper shall be uttered, no intimations given, that can be construed into an interference with religious liberty which the Constitution guards, or with social or political rights which the Constitution recognizes.”

Gentlemen, Mr. Reed's record on this question is not a brief one. It began before he was born. [Laughter.] But I shall soon be done with it. On the 24th of September, 1856, he delivered a speech at a Buchanan meeting held in the town of Somerset, in this State. It was printed in pamphlet form, before delivery, and was afterwards circulated in that form very extensively. I am the fortunate owner of a copy, which I hold in my hand. It is entitled, “The Appeal to Pennsylvania—a Speech, by Wm. B. Reed.” Not an appeal, but *the* appeal. He put it forth as the one great speech of the campaign, that eclipsed every other speech, and was to make his calling and election sure in the event of Mr. Buchanan's success. [Laughter and applause.] From this speech, on the very last page, I now read a brief autobiographical sketch :

“I am a Philadelphia man, born and bred in the metropolis of my State, which has honored me and confided in me. I have a loyal Pennsylvania heart throbbing within me, for all the fame and all the honor that belong to me and mine were won in Pennsylvania. Among the honors which Pennsylvania wears is her Act of 1780, providing for the gradual abolition of slavery within her limits. To that act, as the Chief Magistrate of this Commonwealth, is affixed the name of one who



was near and dear to me (my grandfather), and to the great principle of that act I, and every true Pennsylvanian, steadfastly adhere, because it contains no word of wrong to others, but all of duty to ourselves. It is to the principles of that act to which Mr. Buchanan adhered when, in the Senate of the United States, in 1836, he said his principles as to slavery were those of Pennsylvania."

Thus Mr. Reed defined his position on the 24th September, 1856. What the great principle of the Act of 1780 was, and is, I think has been made clear. This completes the first volume of the record—the last honor to the memory of the ancestor.

Mr. Buchanan thought the speech of 1856 worth a mission to China. [Laughter.] I believe the question of its value gave rise to some discussion in the Cabinet. Had Mr. Reed thrown his grandfather and the Act of 1780 overboard, I mean in the Somerset speech, he would have fared better. [Laughter.] Judge Black was obliged to compromise on the Chinese mission, and Mr. Reed promised himself to "do better" the next time.

Now, we have his speech against Mr. Lincoln, against all the free States—against all the citizens of the free States whom Mr. Reed met abroad during what he calls his long exile—against the Pennsylvania sentiment of 1780—against those acts and manly opinions of John Sergeant and Horace Binney, and Samuel Breck and Thomas P. Cope, and William J. Duane, that made Philadelphia respected—and even against the ancestor who was so near and dear to the loving and ambitious descendant. And all for what? Hear him, and you can judge. I read from the last paragraph of the speech:

"Mine are the first words from Pennsylvanian lips that have been spoken for John C. Breckenridge. They have not been inconsiderately uttered. They are probably my last; for I must leave to others the active conduct of this campaign, willing to be a private soldier in the ranks. I shall have my full reward if what I have uttered to-night shall not be in vain."

[Shouts of laughter.]

I perceive you understand him!

Now it so happens that Mr. Reed's were not the first words from Pennsylvania lips that were spoken for John C. Breckenridge. The very association that he addressed had been organized long before. Mr. Benjamin Rush had spoken before in favor of Mr. Breckenridge consistently, and I have no doubt, decently and eloquently. I say consistently, because Mr. Rush has always been a Democrat. Mr. Reed knew all that very well, but he takes the honors as innocently as if they belonged to him, and puts the crown upon his own head like another Napoleon. If Mr. Breckenridge should happen to be President, whose lips will be so sweet as Mr. Reed's? Whose counsel will be sought in Pennsylvania but Mr. Reed's? The speech will not have been in vain. He will have his full reward.

[Cheers and laughter.]

But he makes provision for another contingency. I read now from the first page of his speech:

"Towards these gentlemen (leaders of the Bell and Everett party,) and their principles so far as they have been made known, we all have a respectful feeling,

which I should be sorry to have checked by foolish letters, or foolish speeches, imputing sectionalism to Mr. Breckenridge. (Admonitory rather.)

"I believe the national sentiment of the country will yet awaken to the necessity of combined and effective action; how, or by what means, I no not pretend to say. It may be at the last moment; (look out for the rocks!) it may be on the very edge of the final contest. No one ought to say a word to render it impossible. No one ought to be restless and fidgety in promoting it. If it does happen, depend on it, a great element of its successful action, will be the organized Democracy of Pennsylvania, the friends in every county of Breckenridge and Lane. Its integrity must be respected. It will be time enough when, by the spontaneous co-operation of patriotic men through the commonwealth, Mr. Foster shall be elected Governor, as he easily can be."

These few words pretty clearly foreshadowed a bargain and sale. And the other night—when the honest friends of Mr. Bell were asleep, suspecting no wrong to themselves, and no disgrace to their cause—a few scurvy leaders, on the alert for whatever was to turn up, caught the dulcet notes from the Breckenridge nursery—

"Bah! mammy black sheep  
Have you any wool?"

[Roars of laughter.]

There was a moment's pause, and then a response:

"Yes, we have, masters,  
Three bags full!"

[Great laughter.]

And the terms were settled and the bargain sealed! When daylight came, the scurvy Bell wethers leaped the ditch, expecting the whole flock to follow and be sheared and left to the winter's cold, while they took all the turnips to themselves! [Laughter.] The arrangement of this practical little duet required the experience of a diplomat, who knew how to make treaties with the people who speak a language unintelligible outside of the wall, and express their emotions through gongs and bells. [Laughter.]

The Chinese party is now fairly in the field, and rallies to the support of Mr. Foster. [Tumultuous applause and laughter.] Permit me, however, to express the opinion, that those Whigs of Philadelphia who have espoused the cause of Mr. Bell as the exponent of their principles, expecting to support him in good faith, without corrupt combinations with other parties whose doctrines and practices they have never approved, will hesitate long before they leap the ditch, which, when once crossed, will separate them forever from the faith they have always professed.

This little matter disposed of, Mr. Reed draws his weapon, and orders himself to charge upon "the common enemy"—Lincoln, and "the compact, fanatical North."

He admits what no man can deny—that Mr. Lincoln conducted his discussion with Mr. Douglas with frankness and ability. His speeches were all published, and if they contained a solitary word of disloyalty to the Constitution, it would not have escaped the research of his assailant. If, at any period of his life, he had ever uttered such a word, it would have been moused out, and exhibited, and harped

upon, and magnified like the "higher law" and "irrepressible conflict" of Mr. Seward. But something has been discovered that looks ominous, ambiguous, and ugly, and it is thus announced :

"Little more than a year ago he wrote a letter, in which he was betrayed into language which, though not very precise, and a little ambiguous, was ominous. It was this :

" 'This is a world of compensations and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.'

"It is not easy to say what this means, but it has an ugly look. Since his nomination Mr. Lincoln has spoken once, and once too often. I refer to his speech at Springfield, about four weeks ago, which was the more significant, as he appears to have been taken by surprise, and to have spoken out, under an impulse, his inner thoughts. There is, I believe, a religious sect called '*Progressive Friends*,' so, in politics, there are *progressive* Republicans, and to this class, it would seem, Mr. Lincoln belongs. I infer this from his speech, which either means this or means nothing. His language was :

" 'My friends, you will fight for this cause, four years hence, as you now fight for it, and even stronger than you now fight for it, though I may be dead and gone.' "

Now as to that sentiment which Mr. Reed says "has an ugly look." It is a moral sentiment. If Mr. Lincoln ever read the Life and Times of Joseph Reed, he found it there. [Applause.] If he was familiar with the Pennsylvania sentiment of 1780, and the resolutions of 1819, and the messages of Governor Johnston, and the speeches, addresses and resolutions of Mr. Reed, at various periods of his life—he saw it as a bright thread running through the whole of them. [Cheers.] If he ever read the speeches of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, he found it in them, a glittering, moral truth. It shines as a beacon for all mankind in the sermon on the Mount, and is written over the gates of salvation. [Applause.] If Mr. Reed had lived in the days of Tiberius Cæsar, and had heard the admonition from the Son of God, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for such is the law and the prophets," would he have said "it has an ugly look!" Would he have said, "this is higher law doctrine—crucify him?" I do not know what he would have said, or what he would have done, to win a smile from imperial Cæsar.

[Tumultuous applause.]

The cause which Mr. Lincoln represents, and which he supposed his friends would fight for, four years hence, "and even stronger than they now fight for it"—is neither more nor less than the cause of the Constitution and the Union. Our country—our whole country. [Cheers.] It is threatened by Mr. Reed's political friends in the South, that the further advance of liberty towards the free territories of the country will be forever resisted, even to the dissolution of the Union. And in reply to that threat we have only to say that, we are on the side of the Constitution as it was framed and construed by the fathers, that our cause is just in the sight of heaven, and remembering that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, we mean to watch it, and fight for it, and maintain it, and, by the blessing of God, we will hand it down to our children, to be watched, fought for, and maintained by

them, and to be transmitted by them to be watched, fought for, and maintained by their posterity forever.

The Union and the Constitution of these States, and all the rights of all the people of these States, if not inconsistent with that "higher law," the will of Almighty God, shall be perpetuated—if our efforts can accomplish it—to the latest time. [Great applause.]

Gentlemen, I have no respect, not a particle, for that unmanly spirit that attempts to magnify the few words uttered by Mr. Lincoln on the occasion referred to—while modestly declining the vociferous demand made upon him for a speech, by an enthusiastic multitude of twenty thousand men—into a contemplated offence against a country that he loves with a sincerity and warmth unknown to the heart of his assailant. [Applause.]

Mr. Reed treats the matter as if he were prosecuting a case of manslaughter in the Quarter Sessions! Hear him:

"Such was the utterance—no doubt the unguarded and genuine utterance—in the West, at Springfield, Mr. Lincoln's home, on the ninth of last month, August. This was, if I mistake not, on the Thursday of one week, on which day, or thereabouts, Mr. Seward sets out to look after Judge Douglas, in New England, and arrived at Boston, on Monday, the 13th, and then and there, as I have said, close to Edward Everett's home, as if in insult and defiance, he reproduces his doctrine of 'irrepressible conflict,' '*ipsissimis verbis*,' and adds with emphasis—speaking I fear by authority—(I quote his very words,) 'Abraham Lincoln confesses his obligation to the higher law, which the sage of Quincy proclaimed, and avows himself, for weal or for woe, life or death, a soldier on the side of freedom, in the irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery.'"

How horrible! Oh, Mr. Seward! Mr. Seward! what have you done! How could you say such a thing, on Monday, the 13th of August, close to Edward Everett's home—on the Thursday after you set out in pursuit of Judge Douglas, who was looking for his mother—on the very Thursday that Mr. Lincoln told the people at Springfield that he thought they would fight for the cause, even harder after he was dead and gone! Mr. Seward—"it is flat burglary as ever was!" [Great laughter.]

Mr. Seward seems to take some pleasure in stirring up the indignation of a certain class of politicians, by a repetition of those cabalistic words—"irrepressible conflict"—and "higher law." I once knew a very clever man who always carried a red silk handkerchief. He happened one day to be crossing a field where some cattle were grazing, and having occasion to use his handkerchief took it from his pocket. A bull, not far off, caught sight of it as it fluttered in the wind, and immediately made a dash at the possessor, who narrowly escaped severe punishment. Whenever my friend had occasion to cross that field afterwards, he would shake his red handkerchief at the bull, and he would invariably make a mad charge upon the enemy. I asked him one day, "Why do you expose yourself to such danger?" "Well," said he, "it amuses me to see the bull get mad at such a thing—and I want to try if I can't cure him of it." [Roars of laughter.] Mr. Seward seems to have a propensity for the same kind of sport. If he happens to see a democrat in repose, he has only to say "irrepressible

conflict" or "higher law," to start him to his legs and throw him into an agony of passion. [Shouts of laughter.]

Gentlemen, this "irrepressible conflict" theory, did not originate with Mr. Seward. It came directly from John C. Calhoun—not *ipsissimis verbis*, it is true—but substantially, and in fact. You will find it by reading the debate on his famous resolutions of 1838, the third of which declared that

"This government is bound so to exercise its powers as to give, as far as may be practicable, increased stability and security to the domestic institutions of the States that compose the Union; and that it is the solemn duty of the government to resist all attempts by one portion of the Union to use it as an instrument to attack the domestic institutions of another, or to weaken or destroy such institutions, instead of strengthening and upholding them, as it is in duty bound to do."

This attempt to obtain from the free States the concession and declaration that it is the duty of the Federal government to give increased stability and security to the institution of slavery, and to strengthen and uphold it, met with such general opposition from Senators North and South, that Mr. Calhoun saw the struggle was then hopeless. But he never abandoned it. He always considered that it was the true policy of the South to insist upon it, and demand it, as the only principle on which the Union could be preserved. In 1847, he wrote a letter to a member of the Alabama Legislature, in which he declared that he was from the beginning in favor of "forcing" the slavery issue on the North. He considered delay dangerous, and the South morally and politically stronger than she ever would be again. And no man in his senses can deny the historical fact, that this conflict has been going on ever since the Constitution was adopted. Manifestoes of State conventions, resolutions of town meetings, pledges of political parties, and legislative measures of compromise, all intended to put an end to it, lie scattered and trampled upon all over the whole length of years that have passed since the Union was formed, and the conflict still rages, worse now than ever before. The only possible way to check the conflict is to stop the further extension of the system. [Cheers.] When that is declared to be the settled policy of the government, we shall have no more excitement or agitation respecting it. Mr. Seward has happily expressed Mr. Calhoun's theory in the few words which he now uses as a handkerchief to excite the bull. [Laughter and applause.]

The doctrine of "the higher law" was also accepted and avowed by Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Clay once referred to him in the Senate as a partisan of Mr. Van Buren's administration. Mr. Calhoun repelled the charge, and denied that he was the partisan of any man or any administration. "It was," he said, "his fortune to stand in the Senate alone, with no other guide but God and his conscience." In his memorable reply to Mr. Clay in 1838, on the Independent Treasury bill, he said :

"In a conversation with a friend about the responsibility I would assume, he remarked, that my own State might desert me. I replied, that it was not improbable; but the result has proved that I under-estimated the intelligence and



patriotism of my noble and virtuous State. I ask her pardon for the distrust implied in my answer; but I ask with the assurance that it will be granted *on the grounds that I shall put it*—that in being prepared to sacrifice her confidence, as dear to me as light and life, *rather than disobey on this great question the dictates of my judgment and conscience*, I proved myself worthy of being her representative.”

When that distinguished man said that he stood in the Senate alone, “with *no guide, but God and his conscience*,” and that he was ready to sacrifice the confidence of his State, as dear to him as light and life, rather than disobey the dictates of his judgment and *conscience*, he distinctly recognized the existence of a “higher law” than the Constitution of the United States, to which he was subject. I have always supposed that all civilized nations admitted the will of God to be a higher law than ever can be made by human agency. History furnishes us with a solitary exception, and that was of brief duration. The fiendish spirits of the French Revolution impiously denied the Divine authority in the affairs of men, and for a time, the world beheld an entire people openly and defiantly renouncing their responsibility to God, and the representatives of a great nation, doing public homage to the Goddess of Reason, in the person of a wretched prostitute. [Great applause.]

“The higher law” explicitly asserts the authority of civil government, and enjoins obedience to it. It commands, amongst other things, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake.” He who is under the influence of the “higher law” is therefore in submission to the Constitution and laws of his country, and cannot fail to be a good citizen. Those only who deny or disregard the authority of such a law are depredators upon society, or disturbers of the public peace. [Cheers.] And nowhere, in no section of the country, do you find them so numerous as among the new political friends of Mr. Reed in the Southern States, who are threatening us with a dissolution of the Union for performing our duty to the country, by electing the man of our choice to the Presidency of the United States. But Mr. Reed does not rebuke those treasonable threats. On the contrary, he encourages them by the expression of an opinion that Mr. Lincoln’s election is full of threatened evil to the Union, and he can find no other ground for it than the “sad conviction” that Mr. Lincoln and his friends will not adopt the theory of Mr. Calhoun, that this government is bound to legislate for the protection of slavery in free territories. [Cheers.]

That Mr. Lincoln will maintain the Pennsylvania doctrine of 1780, on the subject of slavery extension, I have no earthly doubt. That he will be influenced in the administration of the government by fanatical men, who set the laws of their country at defiance, either in the North or the South, no man has any reason to believe. The effort to hold him responsible for the speeches and sentiments of Mr. Seward, Mr. Sumner, Wendell Phillips, and Victor Hugo and Lord Brougham, is the artful policy that was resorted to by the Democratic party in 1844 to exclude Mr. Clay from the Presidential chair, to which I have already referred, and which was only too successful. The Whigs of

Philadelphia at that time had sense enough to see through it; they had no sympathy whatever with the abolitionists, and they clung all the more closely to our gallant chief, because of the calumny with which he was assailed. [Applause.]

If the votes of abolitionists corrupt the blood of a candidate, and inoculate him with the disease, it would be good policy in them to distribute their suffrages among Breckinridge, Douglas, and Bell, and thus abolitionize the whole concern. It would make no odds to them who wins, and all agitation would cease. But I hope nobody who has the itch will vote for Mr. Lincoln. [Applause and laughter.]

Mr. Reed is painfully impressed with the rescue of a fugitive slave in one of the northwestern States. So painful is it to his feelings that he devotes, including his appendix, nearly three closely printed pages to the subject, giving the details with a minuteness that might lead one to suppose that, he belongs to the reportorial corps of the Pennsylvanian. It is true that such things occasionally happen, and I condemn as emphatically as Mr. Reed all such resistance to the laws of the land. He distinctly admits, that prior to the decision of the Prigg case by the Supreme Court of the United States, the recapture and surrender of fugitive slaves was as simple and easy as the surrender of a fugitive from justice. What, then, has wrought this change in the North? and with whom rests the responsibility? The difficulty commenced, not with a New England judge, as the gentleman asserts, but with the State of Maryland. In 1826, that State appointed a commission, consisting, I think, of three of her distinguished citizens, to make application to the Legislature of Pennsylvania for the passage of a law to facilitate the capture and surrender of slaves escaping into this State. This resulted in the passage of such an act as was required, entitled "An Act to give effect to the provisions of the Constitution of the United States, relative to fugitives from labor, for the protection of free people of color, and to prevent kidnapping." It was approved on the 25th of March, 1826.

We got along smoothly enough with our neighbors, as Mr. Reed admits, until a man by the name of Prigg, a citizen of Maryland, was arrested, tried, and convicted in York county of kidnapping, under the provisions of that act. Prigg was represented by counsel employed by the State of Maryland to defend him. There was no difficulty or disagreement about the facts, but the defence set up was, that the act under which he was convicted was unconstitutional, and therefore void. For the purpose of testing the question thus raised by our sister State, in order to relieve one of her citizens from punishment for the offence he had committed, Pennsylvania, at the instance of the State of Maryland, passed a special act on the 22d of May, 1839, by which the case was finally removed to the Supreme Court of the United States, and the question there raised as to the power of State legislation over that part of the Constitution of the United States which relates to fugitive slaves.

The question was argued in that Court by the Attorney General of Pennsylvania, the late Ovid F. Johnson, in support of the law, and by

the counsel of the State of Maryland on the other side. The Court, at January Term, 1842, unanimously adjudged the act of Pennsylvania, upon which the indictment of Prigg was founded, to be unconstitutional and void. It was also held by a majority of the Court that the States had no right to legislate on the subject at all, not even for the purpose of facilitating the arrest of fugitives. That the States might prohibit their own officers from taking jurisdiction in such cases, although the act of Congress of 1793 conferred such authority on the State magistrates. It was further held, that the owner of a fugitive slave had a right, under the Constitution, to follow him into any State, capture and remove him, provided he could do so without committing a breach of the peace. Thus it was "that all local, auxiliary legislation" on the subject was annulled. The trouble commenced not with a New England judge, as Mr. Reed most unfairly asserts, but with the State of Maryland. [Cheers.]

The case is reported in 16 Peters, page 539.

This decision left the free colored population of the southern counties of this State without protection. Several of them were kidnapped by bands of miscreants organized for the purpose, and there was strong reason to suspect that certain justices of the peace and constables in our own State gave countenance to the outrages, under color of the Act of Congress of 1793. This led to the Pennsylvania Act of 1847, prohibiting such officers from exercising any jurisdiction whatever in such cases, and denying the use of our jails for the imprisonment or detention of persons claimed as fugitive slaves. Then followed the Fugitive Slave Law of Congress, passed in 1850, which contains provisions that have rendered it offensive to thousands of high-toned men of the North, who have no sympathy whatever with abolitionists, and who are as loyal to the Constitution as Mr. Reed, or any other man. It provides among other things, that an officer charged with the execution of a warrant for the arrest of a fugitive, may call any citizen to his aid, and thereupon it shall be the duty of that citizen to assist in the capture. George Alberti, with such a warrant in his hands, may tap Mr. Reed, or any other citizen, on the shoulder, and order him to go into Bedford street, or elsewhere, and assist him in the capture of a runaway negro. The Commissioner who issues the warrant may summon all the people of the county for the same purpose, and the law requires them to obey. When the fugitive is arrested, if the Commissioner surrender him as a slave, he is entitled to a fee of ten dollars; if he turns out to be a free man, he receives a fee of five dollars. These insulting provisions in the bill were totally unnecessary to its efficient operation; but southern members of Congress madly and arrogantly demanded them, and succeeded in their object. If a slave escapes from Mr. Keitt, of South Carolina, and happens to reach Philadelphia, the merchant, the clerk, the mechanic, the doctor, the lawyer, and even the bishop must all turn out, if they are ordered to do so by a United States Commissioner, and assist in securing the fugitive and returning him to his owner!

That this provision of the law was unnecessary, is manifest from the



fact that it has never been acted upon. But there it stands, a burning and gratuitous insult to every freeman in the North; and it is no wonder that the law is unpopular. The Constitution of the United States distinctly declares that fugitives shall be surrendered to the persons to whom their services are due, and it is our duty to respect it. I do not doubt that a law to make effectual that provision of the Constitution, free from the offensive and degrading provisions to which I have referred, would be obeyed in the North as fully and universally as any other law on the Statute-book. The laws of a Republican government respecting personal rights and obligations, should conform as nearly as circumstances will admit, to the enlightened popular sentiment; because public opinion, and not the point of the bayonet, is the efficient engine for their enforcement. [Applause.]

I do not justify the violation of the law to which Mr. Reed has referred, and we are not supporting a candidate for the Presidency who does so, or who is responsible or answerable for it in any sense. It is much more adroit than just to reproach Mr. Lincoln for the offences of Massachusetts and Wisconsin, on the ground that he is likely to receive the electoral votes of those States.

While the gentleman was looking up and manufacturing charges against "the compact, fanatical North," and was overflowing with sympathy for "the stricken and insulted South," he would have done well to consider what laws of the country have been set at defiance in that quarter, to which all his affections, and all his vaunted hereditary loyalty to Pennsylvania and Philadelphia, so suddenly—in the twinkling of a Chinese eye—have been transferred. [Great laughter.] He might then have answered his own challenge to the friends of Mr. Lincoln, to tell him what is meant by Southern aggression. He used to know very well. No man understood it better or condemned it more eloquently than he. "Has the South," he wishes to know, "ever stolen any of our property from us?" If his question be limited to the circle of Democratic politicians in the South with whom he is now acting, I answer—they have.

He himself belonged to and was the property of Pennsylvania; by which I mean that he owed service and allegiance to the State, mental and physical service, which, according to the Dred Scott decision, and the new school of Constitutional lawyers, converts the man himself into a chattel and makes him property. [Laughter and cheers.] He is now a fugitive—a fugitive from the North. South Carolina has caught him, and holds him, and claims him. It is true we have made no demand for his surrender, but that does not change the moral aspect of the case. The South should send him back, she knows he is none of hers. She should hang the life of General Reed about his neck, and turn his face to the north star! [Great laughter.]

The gentleman assures his fellow citizens that, if they "ask the most or the least declamatory railer against the South who is now marshalling the forces of Mr. Lincoln, to tell you what he means by Southern aggression, he won't know what to say, short of offensive generalities."

I am no railer against the South, and never have been. I have friends and kindred there whom I respect and love, and I have a share, like all of you, in the tomb of Washington, and the glories of Yorktown, which is not for sale. [Cheers.] But I will endeavor to answer the gentleman's question.

Aggression, according to the lexicographers, means the first attack or act of hostility, the first act of injury, or the first act leading to a controversy. And Southern aggression means acts of that character by Southern politicians, leading to controversies with the North. The claim of the South to introduce slavery into all the territory of the country purchased by the government or obtained by conquest, accompanied by threats of a dissolution of the Union if refused, was an act of aggression. Such a claim and such threats were made in 1818, and led to the Missouri controversy and Compromise.

The claim was again made by the South in 1849, accompanied by the same threats, in anticipation of the probable formation of a free State out of part of the territory acquired from Mexico; and of any action by Congress excluding slavery from the territory. A sectional address, prepared by Mr. Calhoun, and signed by the Southern members of Congress, was issued to the Southern States, and responded to by several of them, in language of defiance to the North, and treason to the Constitution.

The claim was repeated by the South, with the same threats, in 1850, when California applied for admission as a State, with a free constitution adopted by her own citizens, twelve thousand votes being cast in its favor, and only eight hundred and eleven against it. Her admission was violently opposed by the South, because her citizens had voted to exclude slavery. Mr. Calhoun said it was a monstrous assumption. She was finally admitted, on the adoption of the Compromise measures, which the North accepted as a final settlement of the slavery question.

Notwithstanding the Compromise, the question of disunion was kept alive in the South, and the peace of the country threatened. In South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, open ground was taken in favor of secession and a Southern Confederacy. Several presses in Georgia advocated immediate secession. A leading paper at Columbus, said:

"We have all along contended that the admission of California would fill to overflowing the poisoned cup of degradation, which the North has for years been preparing for the South. \* \* \*. We abandon the Union as an engine of infamous oppression. \* \* \*. Henceforth we are for war upon the government; it has existed but for our ruin, and to the extent of our ability to destroy it, it shall exist no longer."

In November of the same year, the Nashville Convention assembled, with representatives from Virginia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina. That body adopted a series of resolutions, one of which asserted the right of any State to withdraw from the Union. Another was in the following words:

"*Resolved*, That all the evils anticipated by the South, and which occasioned

this convention to assemble, have been realized by the failure to extend the Missouri line of Compromise to the Pacific ocean, by the admission of California as a State—by the organization of the territorial government for Utah and New Mexico, without giving adequate protection to the property of the South—by the dismemberment of Texas, by the abolition of the slave trade, and the emancipation of slaves carried into the District of Columbia for sale.”

They demanded protection to slavery in the territories as a constitutional right. They recommended the slaveholding States to meet in a congress or convention, and on failure to obtain a full recognition of all their rights which they claimed, to provide for their future safety and independence. All these were so many acts of aggression. Add to them the other aggressions complained of in Mr. Reed’s resolution of 1855—the Nebraska and Kansas measures—the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise line—the lawless and violent conduct of individuals in Kansas, and then his fifth resolution, declaring that those measures were a wanton renewal of sectional agitation for which the North was not responsible, and still the roll is unfinished.

They attempted, under General Jackson’s administration, to nullify the acts of Congress which gave incidental protection to American industry.

They not only assert that the Constitution authorizes Congress to pass laws for the protection of their slave property in the territories, but threaten, in case such laws are not passed, that the Union shall be dissolved; and they deny the right of Congress to protect the property of the poor white man of the North, which consists not of negroes, but of the products of his own industry, and threaten if you do protect it, that the Union shall be dissolved. [Cheers.]

They deny the power of Congress to make appropriations for the improvement of our rivers and harbors, while they assert its authority to levy a tax of two hundred millions of dollars upon the people for the purchase of Cuba. [Cheers.]

They vote in almost solid column against the appropriations for the extension of our lighthouse system, made necessary for the safety of our commerce, by recent discoveries of new channels and new shoals on our coasts—and now contemplate a new aggression by demanding the repeal of the law which declares the African slave trade to be piracy.

They sanction and encourage buccaneering expeditions for the invasion and seizure of whole districts of country belonging to a people with whom they have no cause of quarrel; and when the lawless invaders are driven off and their robber chief returns with the blood of his innocent victims upon his hands, they receive him into their houses as a gentleman and a hero, and supply him with the means to renew his horrible work of plunder and of death. [Cheers.] And when a daring fanatic, instructed by such an example, gathers around him a little band of vagabonds, and crosses the borders of Virginia on a similar expedition, they charge the entire North with complicity in his crime, and declare it to be the result of the doctrines taught by Mr. Reed and his grandfather. [Cheers and laughter.]

Such are some of the aggressions and inconsistencies of those democratic politicians of the South with whom Mr. Reed is now associated, who are seeking to convert a government founded on principles of morality, justice and beneficence, into a mighty engine of oppression, to be used for the sole purpose of extending and strengthening the institution of slavery. Driven out of Pennsylvania by the humanity and virtue of the men of the revolution, and acting upon the doctrine recently asserted by Mr. Yancey, that it is easier to degrade the white man than to improve the slave, this restless spirit of aggressive slavery again enters our borders and finds a willing instrument in a former foe.

"Here perhaps  
Some advantageous act may be achieved  
By sudden onset; either with hell-fire  
To waste his whole creation, or possess  
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,  
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,  
Seduce them to our party, that their God  
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand  
Abolish his own works!"

[Tumultuous applause.]

If he were an honest man when he wrote the life of his grandfather—if that work is to be regarded as a history, and not as fiction; if he were honest in his former opinions that slavery is wrong *per se*, sectional and not national, and that Congress ought not to protect it: if he were honest when he declared, in his well-considered resolutions of 1855, that the Kansas and Nebraska measures were a wanton renewal of sectional agitation for which the North was not responsible; that those measures, with the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise line, were abhorrent to the people of the North, and ought to be redressed; if he were honest in the expression of his earnest hope that the action of a Whig convention to assemble in 1855, might be unreserved in the enunciation of the principles which he then avowed, and Republican in every sense; if he were honest in all these, what are we to think of him now?

I can understand how a man, who has pursued a long career of folly and of crime, may be suddenly arrested in his course by a flash of conscience that, makes the higher law, written by the finger of God upon his heart, plain to his understanding, and turns him from the error of his ways. But I can conceive of no rational or moral excuse for one, who has spent a long life in bringing the palpable, practical truths of Christianity to bear upon and strengthen the political objection to the extension of slavery, to fly suddenly from his natural orbit—a circle of living light—and become the willing and truculent assailant of all that he has ever written—all that he has ever professed before God and man—and by indirection, at least, of all whom he has ever loved and honored, within and without the line of his ancestry. [Tumultuous applause.] I cannot measure the height that he has fallen, for I cannot fathom the dark abyss where he now moves, in counsel

with the spirits of discord and disunion. For his own sake, I could hope that he has found that

“Slow and silent stream,  
\* \* \* \* whereof who drinks  
Forthwith his former state and being forgets :  
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.”

[Great applause.]

Better for him had he died before the faith of his fathers was exchanged for the already faded honors of a foreign mission. [Cheers.] For then, history might have said that he was valiant for freedom, vindicated the rights of humanity, withstood temptation, and carried to his grave the respect of many good and virtuous men. And if those who live and die in the same faith be permitted to renew their associations, when raised as spiritual bodies, he would have enjoyed the unspeakable pleasure of spending his eternity with that ancestor whose virtues he has so often extolled, and whose public career he once deemed so worthy of emulation. [Great applause.]

Gentlemen, there are other points presented in this ultra-sectional speech which I should be glad to notice fully, if time and my own strength would permit, and your patience would endure. I can but give them a passing glance.

A tariff man all his life, he now tells his fellow-citizens that “the great southern staple holds the world in tribute and more than anything keeps the peace; and that peace is worth all the protection which legislative commercial restrictions promise.”

You will observe that he is now against the tariff. Cotton is peace—peace is protection—therefore cotton is protection! Protection is peace—peace is cotton—therefore protection is cotton! It is all cotton. [Laughter.] Cotton is worth more than truth, else Mr. Reed would not have said that Mr. Lincoln is shaking his fist at the South; else he would not have said that Mr. Lincoln tells the South that no man shall be permitted to be free who owns slaves. This is not clever, because it is not true. The gentleman is shaking his own fist at the North, “the compact, fanatical north.” He would be glad to drive the spirit of his grandfather out of Pennsylvania. [Great cheering.] He would be glad to blot out from our recollections those “manly opinions of John Sergeant, Horace Binney, Samuel Breck, Thos. P. Cope, and Wm. J. Duane, which made Philadelphia respected.” [Cheers.] He would convince you, if he could, and he tries to do it, for he asserts it, that Pennsylvania’s true interests lie in the South and Southwest. He says they are our natural allies! But he fails to tell us what the South and Southwest have done for us as allies. They have opposed all legislation for the protection of our industry—the three old Whig States excepted.

They took from us the tariff of 1842, for which you will hardly be content to accept cotton as a substitute. They oppose the extension of our light-house system, so necessary to our commerce and to the lives of American seamen. They oppose your Homestead bill because

they are opposed to white men settling in the territories unless they take slaves with them. They want no other relation there but that of master and slave. Listen to what Governor Adams, of South Carolina, one of these new found natural allies, says to the Legislature of that State in his message of 1856 :

"It is much better that our drays should be driven by slaves, that our factories should be worked by slaves, that our hotels should be served by slaves, that our locomotives should be managed by slaves, than that we should be exposed to the introduction from any other quarter of a population alien to us by birth, training and education, and which, in the process of time, must lead to the conflict between capital and labor which makes it so difficult to maintain free institutions in all wealthy and civilized nations where such institutions as our (slave institution) do not exist."

Again he says :

"If we cannot supply the demand for slave labor, then we must expect to supply with a species of labor we do not want, and which is, from the very nature of things, antagonistic to our institutions."

You will observe that Governor Adams and Mr. Reed differ slightly. The Governor wouldn't have you as an ally. He would be happy to accept Africa, or Cuba, but no white settlement—no State like Pennsylvania, that has been inoculated by Mr. Reed and his ancestor with a pestilent spirit of liberty. [Cheers.]

The gentleman is much concerned on the subject of the tariff. He objects to the resolution of the Chicago Convention relating to that subject, because he considers it involved in obscure generalities ; and expresses the opinion that Pennsylvania is not safe in the company of "the compact, fanatical North." Mr. Adams, of Massachusetts, who made a speech in this hall some time since, did not refer to the tariff, and Mr. Reed considers that very suspicious. He admits that the South, our "natural ally," is free trade, and has a proposition to make by which we shall be saved. Here it is :

"If Pennsylvania, vigilant of her interests, has to choose between two schools of free trade, that which is candidly, and manfully, and honestly professed by the South, and that which is in masquerade in the North and East, her chance will be better with the first, for all the tariff *she* needs (*especially if she earns confidence and gratitude by fidelity to the Constitution, the Union, and the adjudicated rights of the South*), than if led away from the path in which she has always walked, turned from the safe democratic groove in which she has always moved, she trusts herself to that vast conglomeration of fanatical and mercenary communities and bankrupt railroad corporations—for such, almost without exception, are the Northern and Northwestern Railroad Companies, which at this moment constitute the great Lincoln army of the North."

Gentlemen, that is pretty strong. Coupled with the sad conviction which presses upon him, that Mr. Lincoln and his friends regard slavery as wrong, *per se*, and that Congress has no right, under the Constitution, to authorize the armies of the United States to be employed for the subjugation of freedom in those territories where slavery has not yet entered, it looks to me, very much like a farewell address to the North. [Cheers.] Can it be possible that Mr. Buchanan has made out a commission, appointing him to fill the vacancy



on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, to be presented as the reward for all this truculent demonstration against free institutions?

Has he the promise of that high position for effecting what he called, in 1851, in this circular, "the most discreditable local combinations" to defeat our candidates for Governor, Congress, the State Legislature, and municipal offices? Cannot three honest men be found—one from the Breckenridge, one from the Douglas, and one from the Constitutional Union party—to look in his boot, as the three militia men did in the boot of Major Andre, for the terms on which the liberty and independence of the North are to be surrendered? [Tumultuous applause.]

Gentlemen, the resolution of the Chicago Convention is as full and free from ambiguity on the subject of protection to the industrial interests of the country, as any that was ever passed in a Whig National Convention.

And, in answer to all the artful quibbling of the gentleman, I have only to add in conclusion on this point, that, at the very last session of Congress, every Republican in both Houses recorded his vote in favor of a tariff for the protection of our industry. They formed a solid column, not merely to increase the duty on the staples of Pennsylvania—which would benefit no other interest, and would be sectional therefore—but to establish a system and a principle, under which all the great interests of the entire nation would be raised from death into vigorous, active life. [Applause.]

My fellow citizens, I did not come here to indulge a personal feeling of unkindness to Mr. Reed—for it is not in my heart. I came to expose the duplicity, the selfishness and the corruption of the politician, and vindicate myself and those with whom I am acting, in our common efforts to elevate honest men to office, through whom the government may be administered according to the precedents of the fathers; the rights of the people respected; concord, peace and prosperity restored, and the strength of the nation renewed. [Cheers.]

The remedy for the disturbance, distrust and agitation which have prevailed so long is plain. That remedy is in the hands of the people. The persistent and irritating efforts of corrupt politicians to extend the institution of slavery, and the practical right of three-fifths of all the slaves to vote, through their owners for representatives in Congress, has for its sole object, the perpetuation of their own power. They must be checked. No concessions we have ever made to them have availed, to preserve the peace which we have so often purchased. Pennsylvania must nail her ancient banner to the ark of the Constitution, and proclaim that, henceforth, the free territories of the country are for free men and free institutions. This, and this alone will end the struggle. Slavery will remain where it is, a complete work—watched by its masters and perhaps admired by their children—always secure to them by the guarantees of the Federal Constitution, till it gradually disappears under the peaceful influences of an enlightened Christianity. But liberty will lead the van in the holy work of ex-

tending her own empire westward, until an electric flash from the Pacific shall announce to her sister Ocean—it is finished. *Esto perpetua!*

[On the conclusion of the speech, the audience expressed their appreciation of it by three hearty cheers for the speaker, and separated with cheers for Lincoln and the People's candidates.]









